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INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

December 8, 1970

To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Ray S. Cline *(RSC)*

Subject: Pakistan: Election Results Suggest Fresh Problems

With almost complete results reported, the returns from the December 7 elections in Pakistan reveal an overwhelming victory in East Pakistan for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League and the apparent capture of a majority of seats in West Pakistan by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) led by former Foreign Minister and frequent US-baiter, Z. A. Bhutto. Chief casualties in West Pakistan have been the parties of the right and center; in East Pakistan all other parties have been totally eclipsed.

Domestic Consequences. The Awami League's sweep, which may give it an absolute majority in the forthcoming Constituent Assembly, and the surprising victory of the PPP have called into question almost all of the speculations about the post-election period which preceded December 7. These speculations had anticipated a combination between the Awami League and West Pakistani centrists which would make possible the needed accommodation between Pakistan's two wings on the key issue of provincial autonomy. While accommodation is still possible, it has become more problematical. With an absolute majority, the Awami League may be tempted

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NRD 969001
By *HRM/VSW* Date *12/12/97*

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PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 9, 2005

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to press too hard for more autonomy than the West Pakistanis are prepared to accept. Even if Sheikh Mujib recognizes the dangers inherent in such a course, efforts on his part to restrain his followers may risk his position--and majority.

The emergence of Bhutto as a figure of substantial prominence complicates the situation. His radical appeals are anathema to the present establishment, and thus may raise fresh doubts in the minds of the regime as to the value of popular government. With reference to the constitutional issue, while he has not criticized openly the autonomist demands of the Awami League, his proclivities suggest that he would prefer a strong center. Unlikely to join forces with Sheikh Mujib on this issue, which could in any event diminish his newly-achieved position in West Pakistan, his opposition to anything more than token provincial autonomy would leave the Awami League dependent on the few scattered West Pakistani centrists as it seeks true autonomy.

The key to any resolution of the autonomy issue will be President Yahya. He is assumed to have accepted the need to work with Sheikh Mujib, but this decision was doubtless predicated on a belief that the present West Pakistani ruling elite would be well-represented by centrists who could work with and control the Awami League leader and thus protect West Pakistani interests. This belief Bhutto has destroyed. Since the Constituent Assembly must complete its work on a constitution in 120 days, a task made more difficult by the Assembly's composition, and since Yahya must approve any proposed constitution, the ending of

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martial law and the establishment of popular civilian government presently appear less certain. But if a constitution embodying what the Awami League deems to be adequate autonomy cannot be framed or is rejected, the Bengali reaction could well be secession.

Foreign Affairs Implications. Both the PPP and the Awami League favor the continuation of Pakistan's "balanced" foreign policy in which the United States, the U.S.S.R. and China are dealt with equally, at least in theory. Both also call for Pakistan's withdrawal from SEATO and CENTO. Bhutto, however, has made much of Pakistan's relations with China and there is every reason to conclude that, private disclaimers to the contrary notwithstanding, he would favor China at the expense of the United States. Insofar as the sub-continent is concerned, the views of the Sheikh Mujib and Bhutto are divergent. The Awami League leader favors a lessening of tension and resumption of trade with India; Bhutto, reflecting both his own xenophobia and popular West Pakistani sentiment (including that of the military), urges a hard-line toward India, frequently couched in inflammatory and irresponsible language.

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